



City of Lowell - Planning Board

Planning Board Meeting Minutes

Monday, October 4 6:30 p.m.

City Council Chambers, 2nd Floor, City Hall

City of Lowell, 375 Merrimack Street, Lowell, MA

Remote Participation Optional via Zoom

Note: These minutes are not completed verbatim. For a recording of the meeting, visit www.ltc.org

Members Present

Thomas Linnehan, Chairman

Gerard Frechette, Vice Chairman

Robert Malavich, Member

Russell Pandres, Associate Member

Richard Lockhart, Member

Members Absent

Caleb Cheng, Member

Sinead Gallivan, Associate Member

Others Present

Peter Cutrumbes, Assistant Planner

A quorum of the Board was present. Chairman Linnehan called the meeting to order at 6:30pm.

I. Minutes

September 23, 2021

Motion to continue by T. Linnehan, seconded by R. Lockhart. The motion passed unanimously (5-0).

II. Continued Business

Site Plan Review and Special Permit: 116 & 128 Fletcher Street 01854

James Zorbas and Jeffrey Crowley have applied to the Planning Board for Special Permit and Site Plan Review approval to redevelop the existing structure into eleven (11) residential units at 116 & 128 Fletcher Street. The property is located in the UMU zoning district and requires Special Permit approval pursuant to Section 12.1(e) for the proposed use, and Site Plan Review pursuant to Section 11.4 to create more than three (3) dwelling units.

On behalf:

John Geary, counsel, summarized the project for the Board members and introduced his colleagues. He also noted that the project had previously been approved for a variance, which they have received an extension for. Additionally, he stressed that the applicant plans to use the new HCID Garage to apply for

a Special Permit to reduce the parking requirements. In conjunction with this point, J. Geary stated that the application for 44 Rock Street has been filed in tandem with this application, in order to create parking spaces to help meet the parking requirement. Both parcels are owned by the same person. He also addressed DPD concerns regarding the inclusion of bike racks, screening of the parking area, etc.

Paul Campbell, Engineer, discussed the Site Plan and the deeded access way they have obtained to prevent additional curb cuts. He also discussed landscaping and an additional water quality treatment plan with the LWWU.

James Jozokos, architect, discussed his work with the Historic Board for the historic preservation of the building.

Speaking in Favor:

Russell Leonard, owner of the electrical business at 154 Fletcher Street, spoke in support of the project as he feels it will be a positive addition to the neighborhood. He has asked that a fence be put up in the middle of the right of way to protect any young residents of the apartments from his commercial vehicles arriving at and exiting the property.

Speaking in Opposition:

Discussion: G. Frechette asked where the bike racks are located. P. Campbell said they are by the walkway in front of the building. G. Frechette also asked about the neighbor's request about a fence. J. Geary said his client is happy to accept the fence request. R. Pandres asked how to tie the parking to the 116 Fletcher Street site in perpetuity. J. Geary suggested conditioning approval based on a lease agreement. R. Pandres also asked if the building will have the requested fire protection, which J. Jozokos answered affirmatively. T. Linnehan asked for a clarification on meeting the parking requirement through the HCID garage, which J. Geary provided. T. Linnehan also suggested tying the approval of this project to the approval of Rock Street, thus making them legally codependent.

Motion:

G. Frechette made a motion to approve the Special Permit (Seconded by R. Lockhart) with the following conditions:

- dumpster to be screened with a combination of fencing and evergreen shrubs (plantings) subject to DPD approval
- The landscaping plan shall be subject to final approval by DPD;
- Additional information regarding the location of the bike racks shall be approved by DPD;
- The application is subject to approval by the Lowell Regional Wastewater Utility;
- The application is subject to final approval of the parking proposal for 44 Rock Street by DPD;
- Fencing is to be installed between 116 Fletcher Street and the adjacent electrical contracting business at 154 Fletcher Street to be approved by LFD and LPD; and
- The applicant shall provide a long term lease to DPD dedicating the seven (7) parking spaces at 44 Rock Street for the residents of 116 & 128 Fletcher Street with options to extend.

Unanimously approved (5-0).

G. Frechette made a motion to approve the Site Plan with the same conditions. Seconded by R. Malavich. Unanimously approved (5-0).

Site Plan Review and Special Permit: 44 Rock Street 01854

James Zorbas has applied to the Planning Board for Special Permit and Site Plan Review approval to redevelop the existing lot into an eleven (11) space, approximately 5,400 sq. ft. parking area at 44 Rock Street. The property is located in the UMF zoning district and requires Special Permit approval pursuant to Section 12.6(h) for the proposed use, and Site Plan Review pursuant to Section 11.4 to construct a parking area greater than 4,000 sq. ft.

On behalf:

J. Geary, counsel, summarized the project. P. Campbell, engineer, spoke about developing this lot into parking for the Fletcher Street application.

Speaking in Favor:

Russell Leonard, owner of the electrical business at 154 Fletcher Street, spoke again in support of this project.

Speaking in Opposition:

None

Discussion: G. Frechette expressed support, dependent on DPD review. R. Lockhart inquired about lighting. T. Linnehan asked for the parking spots to be clearly designated for Fletcher Street residents.

Motion:

G. Frechette motioned to approve the Special Permit (seconded by R. Lockhart) with the following conditions:

- The applicant shall reconstruct the sidewalks in front of the site to City standards;
- The applicant shall meet all requirements of the Lowell Regional Wastewater Utility (LRWWU);
- The applicant shall submit a landscaping and lighting plan subject to DPD approval; and
- Seven (7) of the parking spaces shall be clearly marked for the exclusive use of residents of the 116 & 128 Fletcher Street development.

Unanimously approved (5-0).

G. Frechette made the same motion and conditions to approve the Site Plan. Seconded by R. Malavich. Unanimously approved (5-0).

III. New Business

Site Plan Review and Special Permit: 78 Middlesex Street 01852

78 Middlesex Street LLC has applied to the Planning Board for Site Plan Review and Special Permit approval to convert the existing building at 78 Middlesex Street into a 26-unit residential structure. The subject property is located in the Downtown Mixed-Use (DMU) zoning district. The project requires Site Plan Review approval per Section 11.4 to create more than 3 dwelling units and Special Permit approval per Article 12.1(e) and Section 11.3.1 for the proposed use from the Planning Board.

On behalf:

J. Geary, counsel, introduced Brian Geaudreau (Engineer), and Alex Yoon (Architect). He expressed that they worked hard to accept pre-application notes, and summarized the project. J. Geary also addressed DPD comments on waste disposal, parking setback, shade trees, bike shares, etc. He also stated that the pocket park will not be available to the public. B. Geaudreau discussed retrofitting the lot for stormwater management. A. Yoon discussed the Site Plan and the architectural features of the building.

Speaking in Favor:

None

Speaking in Opposition:

None

Discussion: R. Lockhart inquired about outdoor lighting for the pocket park, which B. Geaudreau discussed and pointed out on the plan. G. Frechette asked for a transportation management plan to be established.

Motion:

G. Frechette motioned to approve the Special Permit w/ the following conditions:

- The applicant shall submit a landscaping plan subject to DPD approval;
- The applicant shall screen the trash storage area;
- The applicant shall provide a written Transportation Demand Management Plan; and
- The applicant shall work with the City's Stormwater Management Team to finalize the stormwater design and obtain any required permits.

Unanimously approved (5-0).

T. Linnehan made a motion to approve the Site Plan with the same conditions, seconded by R. Lockhart. Unanimously approved (5-0).

IV. Other Business

Pre-Application: 817 Merrimack Street; 68 Father Morissette Blvd 01854

Kelly Killeen of CHA Consulting Inc. has filed an Agenda Request on behalf of Riveredge Medical Association and Saints Memorial Medical Center Inc. to the Planning Board for a pre-application discussion regarding a proposal to construct a 7 story, 88 unit residential building at 817 Merrimack Street, and to construct a 5 story, 68 unit residential building at 680 Father Morissette Boulevard. The subject properties are located in the Institutional Mixed-Use (INST) zoning district and will require Site Plan Review per Section 11.4.2 and Special Permit approval per Article 12 from the Planning Board, and any other relief required under the Lowell Zoning Ordinance.

On behalf:

Kelly Killeen of CHA in person, Zach Feldman and Jason Lutz via Zoom. K. Killeen summarized the project and some changes recommended by the staff.

Speaking in Favor:

None

Speaking in Opposition:

None

Discussion:

K. Killeen informed the Board of the project's intention to increase the amount of units by around 100. He also confirmed that, while the project is not seeking a Dormitory Special Permit, they intend to market primarily to college students AND that they intend to have 4-bedroom units. K. Killeen was informed that the City's ordinances prevent more than 3 unrelated people from living with each other, and would thus make four bedroom units very difficult to rent.

J. Frechette inquired as to whether they had spoken with UMass Lowell yet about this project, to which K. Killeen answered that they had not. J. Frechette recommended that they do.

R. Lockhart asked if the applicants could consider commercial space on the ground floor of the Merrimack Street building.

R. Pandres asked for dimensions and details on the parking deck. He also recommended that, when the application is put forth, they should include a shadow study.

R. Malavich inquired about the number of beds, to which K. Killeen answered 483. Mr. Killeen did note this may go down if 4 bedroom units cannot be used. R. Malavich also expressed concerns about the height of the buildings.

V. Notices

VI. Further Comments from Planning Board Members

R. Lockhart gave an update on the murals that have been approved by the Historic Board.

VII. Adjournment

T. Linnehan motioned to adjourn, G. Frechette seconded. The motion passed unanimously and the meeting was adjourned at 9:21.